

(Boston Planning - Atlanta)

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Urban Design

Huntington Avenue as Boston's Cultural Boulevard

Elkus/Manfredi Architects Ltd have proposed a concept to transform Huntington Avenue into a grand tree-lined boulevard. The idea for the avenue is to let it serve as an intermediating device between the wide variety of land uses, building scales and open spaces that group together to form Huntington Avenue's urban character. The boulevard will enhance and organize its functional movements, be perceived as a linear center, and link the entities located along it into an integrated whole.

The primary goal for the Huntington Avenue urban design study has been to produce a conceptual vision for the future development of the Avenue as Boston's cultural boulevard. However, within the framework of an overall vision the study has focused on the specific physical nature of the avenue, reviewing its history, evaluating the adjoining neighborhoods various needs, and identifying uses and activities that are dependent upon its location within Boston.

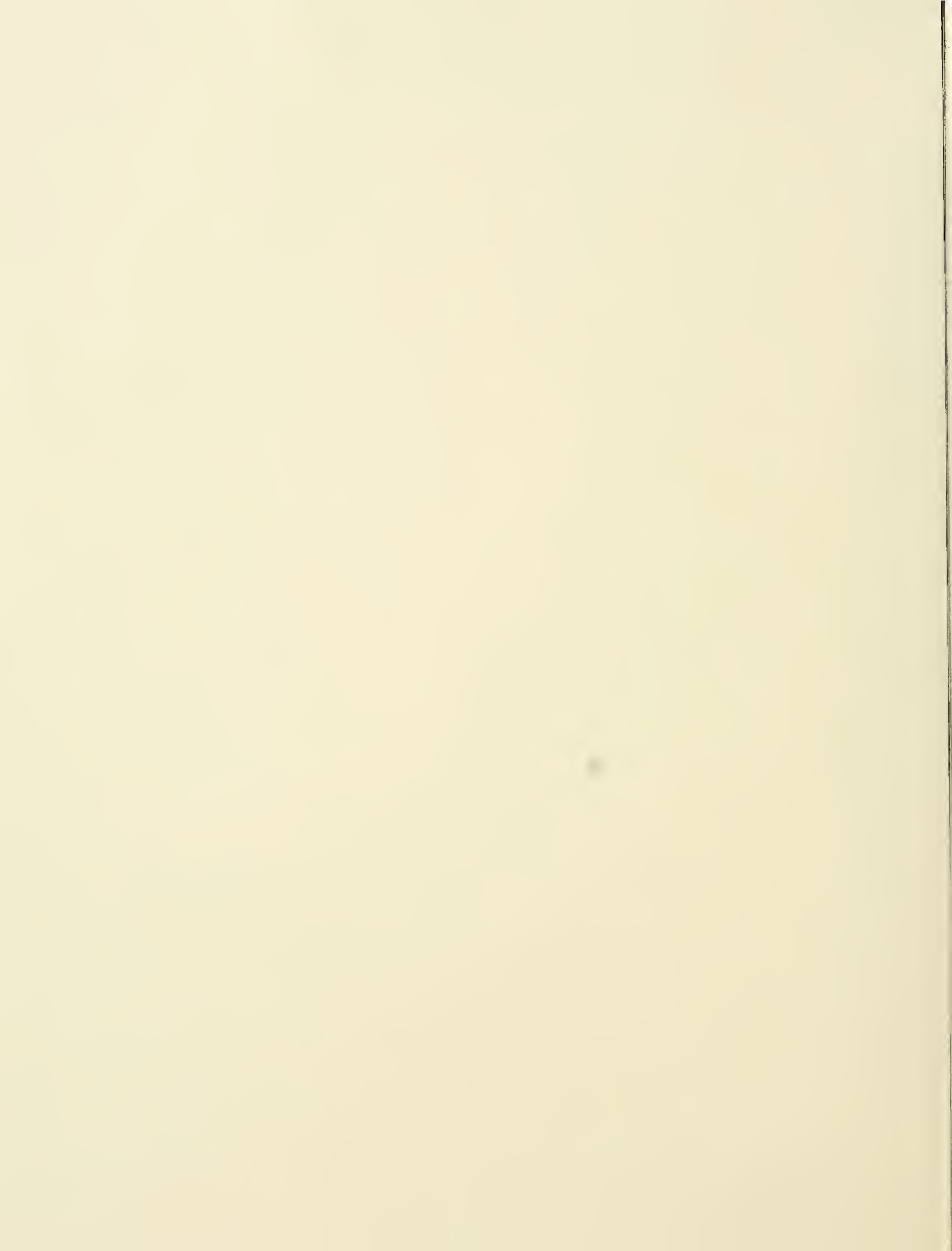
Constrained by the infrastructural development of the modern city and the emphasis on rapid movements; Huntington Avenue has lost its sense of importance as anything but a transportation artery. As a derivative from this context the vision is necessarily informed by a microenvironmental evaluation of its physical and functioning existence.

Huntington Avenue's elemental urban significance as a radiating spoke from the core of the city extending westward as Route 9 to the surrounding suburbs, has been instrumental in the formation of a large part of Boston's urban character. Anchored at Copley

Square the avenue forms a spine that interconnects such important monuments as Trinity Church and the Boston Public Library with the Christian Science Center, Horticultural Hall, Symphony Hall, Northeastern University, The Museum of Fine Arts, and the Longwood medical area. The avenue has helped establish Copley Square as the artistic, cultural and institutional core of the city; the name of the square honors John Singleton Copley the great artist of late eighteenth-century Boston. Huntington Avenue also links the two largest mixed-use developments in the city; The Prudential Center and Copley Place. Within a 5 minute walk of Huntington Avenue there are no less than eight hotels, Boston's Hynes Convention Center, the South End and Back Bay neighborhoods and numerous schools and colleges which add together to create an ideal mixture of urbanism.

Huntington Avenue currently serves these adjoining uses and neighborhoods as a movement link to and from the many locally used retail and service establishments in the area. The task is to insure the continuity of the avenue in its mixed institutional, cultural and social roles, by reinforcing the avenue's street level uses with compatible additions such as cafes, restaurants, galleries, and more retail establishments of all types. The boulevard concept can also discourage the use of Huntington Avenue as a automobile artery and transform it into a significant pedestrian environment by simply changing the character of the street space. In its new form the boulevard will serve as both an advertisement to its neighborhood character and to its grandeur and position as a major urban shaping force in the city of Boston.

Overall objectives and specific urban design goals for the avenue are listed in relation to identifiable segments starting from Copley Square and ending at Symphony Hall.



1 LWS. 1

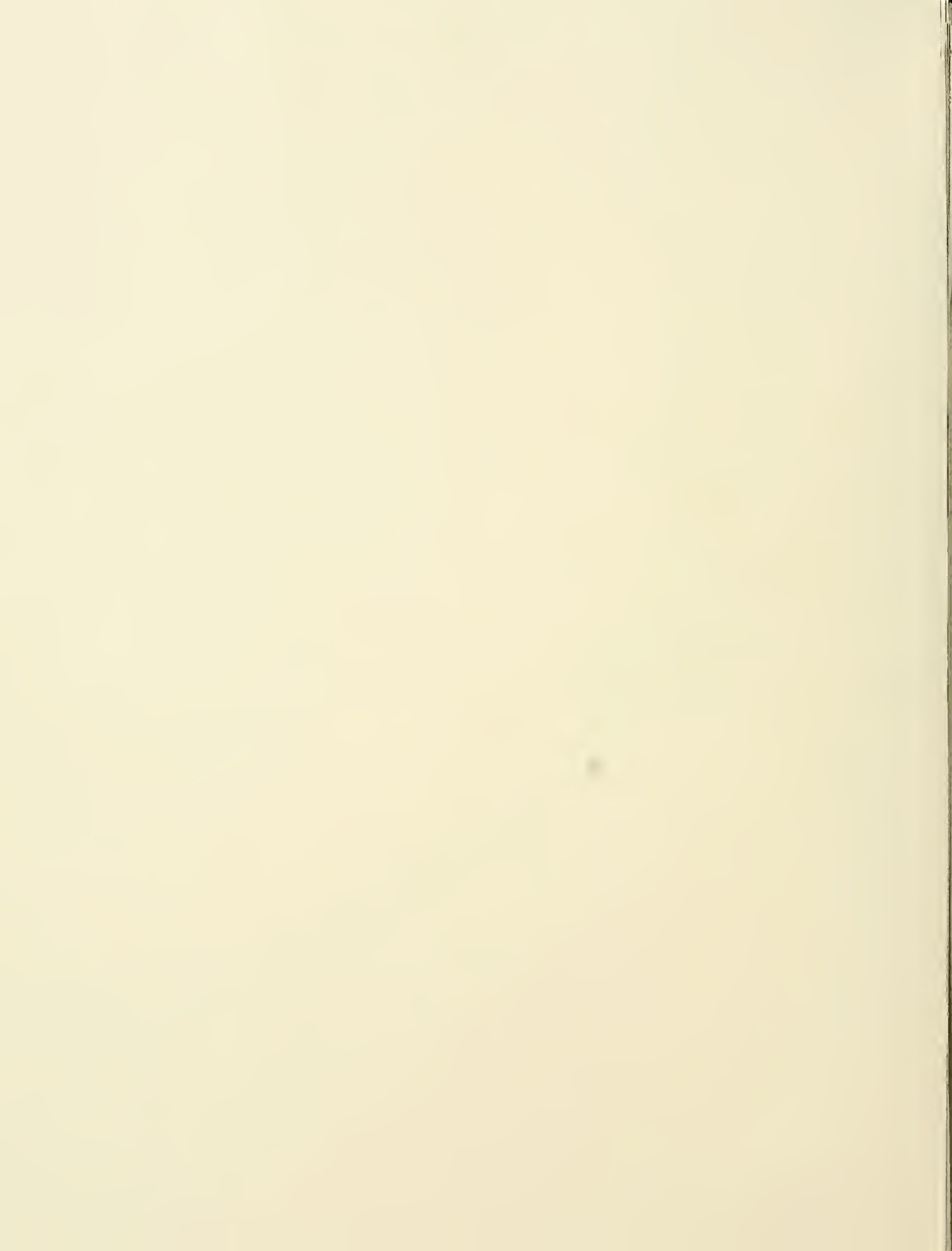
Copley Square

Huntington Avenue and Copley Square share a common urban history; it was with the removal of the diagonally truncating section of Huntington Avenue that Copley Square took on its current form.

Over the years the square has attracted much interest from both the city and the community in determining what the physical design of this important public space should be.

The recently re-designed square has focused new attention on the shortcomings of a plan that fails to embrace a larger realm of interconnected urban spaces. The limits of the intervention fail to connect the plaza with the spatial defining elements of the surrounding buildings. Lacking is a sufficient recognition of the important pedestrian movement patterns that interface and traverse the square. The Huntington Avenue urban design study proposes to establish a stronger visual connection with the public library and down the avenue from Copley Square as well as enhance the peripheral pedestrian zones. This can be achieved with design objectives that are to:

- . Provide improved safe pedestrian passageways by boldly delineating crosswalks and restructuring and managing pedestrian and automotive traffic movements.
- . Study the elimination of excess traffic lanes along Huntington Avenue and Dartmouth Street to reduce crossing distances as well as provide for significant public usage.
- . Establish and integrate with the existing design standards for Copley Square and Boylston Street a palate of materials, treatments, street lighting, street furnishings, and hearty tree species that will give continuity to the proposed boulevard.



- . Create a visual introduction with public art at the gateway onto Huntington Avenue.
- . Refurbish the Massachusetts Turnpike entry with unobtrusive signage and visually pleasing humanly scaled guard rails.

16605.2
Copley Place and The Prudential Center

The strategy of the Urban Design study in this section of Huntington Avenue is to promote a complete interface between these developments by use of the boulevard treatment as an intermediate scaling device. The boulevard will serve as the organizing element and spatial datum from which linkages to these entities will be regulated. Exclusive to this zone is a complexity of infrastructure that constrains logic and forces compromise. Limitations due to the existence of the Massachusetts Turnpike and the need for access to service these developments have combined to create a "no-mans land" in the shadow of these posh edifices. Residents, workers and visitors alike tread cautiously in and around the confusion resulting from layers of fragmented additions and recent improvements.

The objectives for the Copley/Prudential area seek to intermeditate the problems of both the pedestrian and those in traffic by seeking to:

- . Simplify and effectuate a more comprehensible and systematic use of pedestrian crosswalks.
- . Limit mid-block pedestrian crossing by the use of median planters as a barrier.
- . Provide safe-havens for pedestrians at median crossings.



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- . Remove and replace the Massachusetts Turnpike guard rails with large trees in planters that serve the function of the rails.
- . Provide an intimate plaza setting with planted flowers and a small water feature at the street level connection to the Copley Place street bridge.
- . Delineate parking and loading dock accesses within the palette of sidewalk paving materials.
- . Maintain the continuity of large tree plantings and street furnishings such as bollards, lighting posts, tree grates, seating, waste recepticals, etc.
- . Eliminate and confine bus and truck queuing to zones designated by the city for such purposes.
- . Require penetrable building facades at street level with vertically modulated, horizontally segmented facades.
- . Encourage mixed-use ground level restaurants, cafes, retail and service establishments.

ILLUS. 3
The Christian Science Center and South End Neighborhoods

This segment of the avenue has the greatest opportunity for the boulevard to serve as a transitional link from the quiet neighborhoods of the South End to the bustling urban environment of the Prudential Center and to the sequestrious setting of the Christian Science Center. It is here that the tree-lined shaded boulevard character will be established and continued down its length. Large trees that line the avenue and flowers planted in the median strip will serve to buffer the impact of the traffic.

Street crossings will have safe havens, and the grouping of brightly lit and highly delineated crossing zones will allow safer pedestrian street crossings.

Guidelines for the redevelopment of sites at the Colonnade and Mid-Town hotels set height and massing limitations that mediate scale between the neighborhoods and existing developments along Huntington Avenue. These developments will be required to establish a unity with the street through the provision of actively used ground level retail and service establishments and through a modulated vertical breakdown of the street facades that precedents of good design.

The urban design objectives are to:

- . Maintain the limited automobile access to South End neighborhoods.
- . Insure safe pedestrian crossing at West Newton and Cumberland streets, with articulated crossing zones and higher lighting levels.
- . Use planted median barriers to discourage mid-block pedestrian crossings that impede traffic flow.
- . Continue the boulevard treatment of large closely spaced trees, street furnishings, and paving materials.
- . Integrate Prudential's parking with access to the MBTA station for use by patrons to the areas cultural events.
- . Insure that new developments along Huntington Avenue meet zoning guidelines and conform to standards established for height limits, setbacks and requirements for interfacing with

street level uses and facade massing treatments.

- . Encourage residential and or hotel mixed-use developments.
- . Insure that ample parking is provided for within the new developments.
- . Limit auto and service access from Huntington Avenue from service alley only.

12605, 4 & 5
Symphony Square

A major component of the study's visionary outlook is the phased development of the intersection at Huntington Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue into one of Boston's premiere urban spaces.

The existing juxtapositions of Symphony Hall with the Horticultural Hall, the Christian Science Center, Church Park, and Symphony Towers, forms the potential for an exciting urban moment that will magnify the importance of the surrounding institutional and cultural uses.

Early phases of this development call for the upgrading of street crossings, lighting, traffic management, and a beautification program that includes flower plantings and piped-in symphony music in the square.

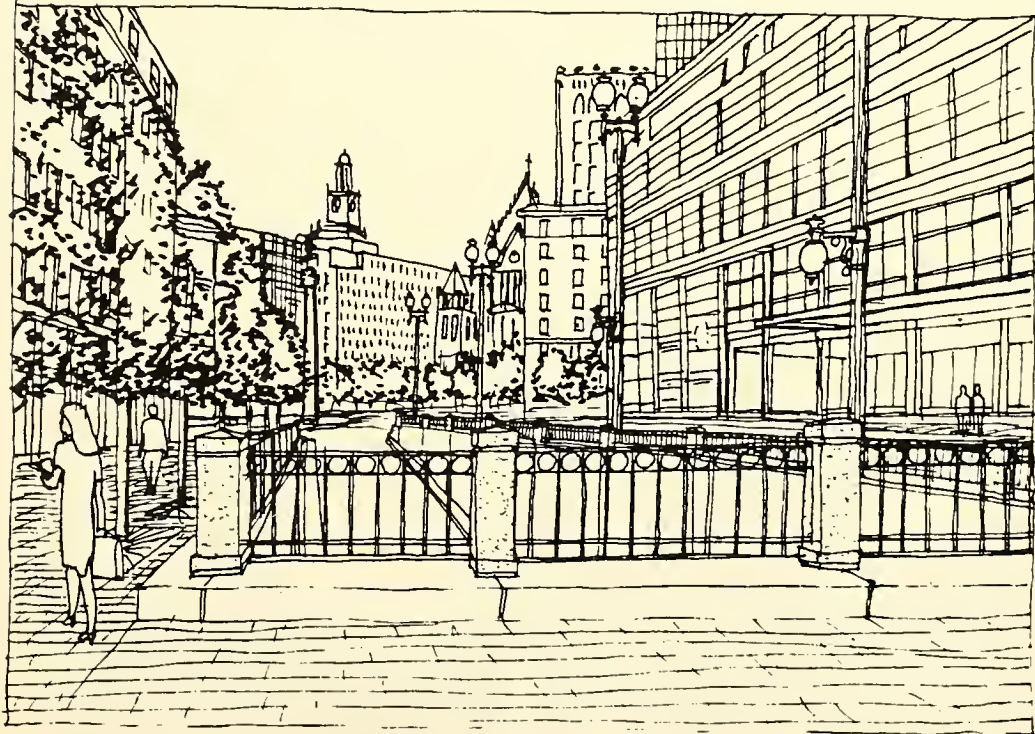
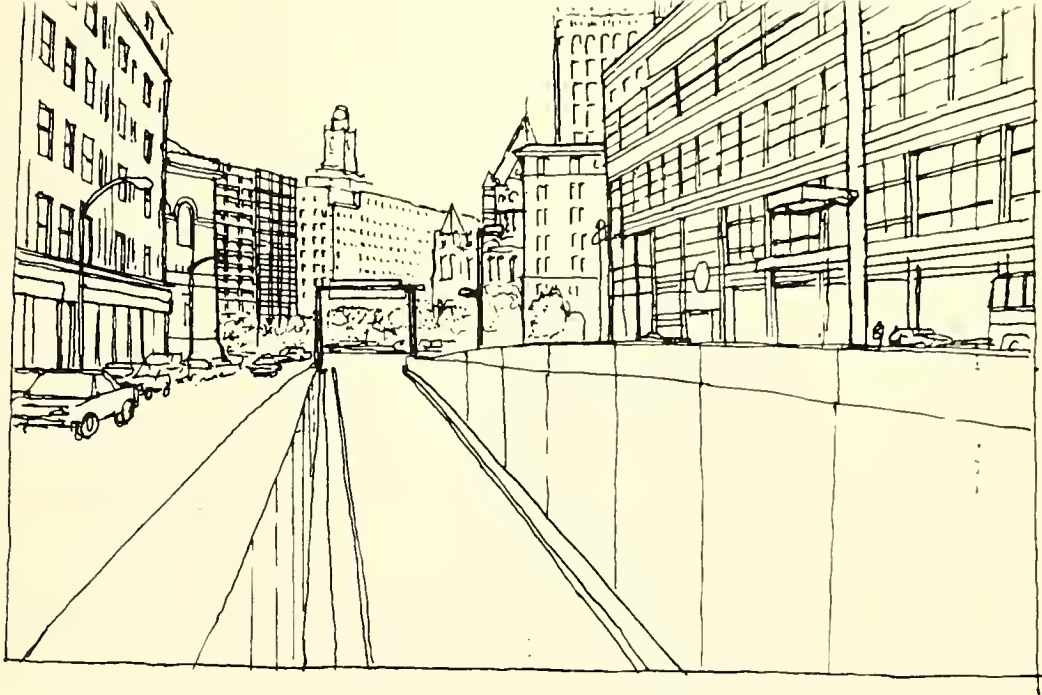
Later phases show the addition of a significant piece of public art at the Westland and Massachusetts Avenue intersection that connects visually to the Fenway and is framed against the background of Horticultural Hall. A fountain located at the corner of Church Park with seasonal plantings provides relief from the monolithic mass of the building. Expansion of the overpass at Huntington Avenue allows for the addition of public art and plantings that

serve as focal points and adornments in front of Symphony Hall.

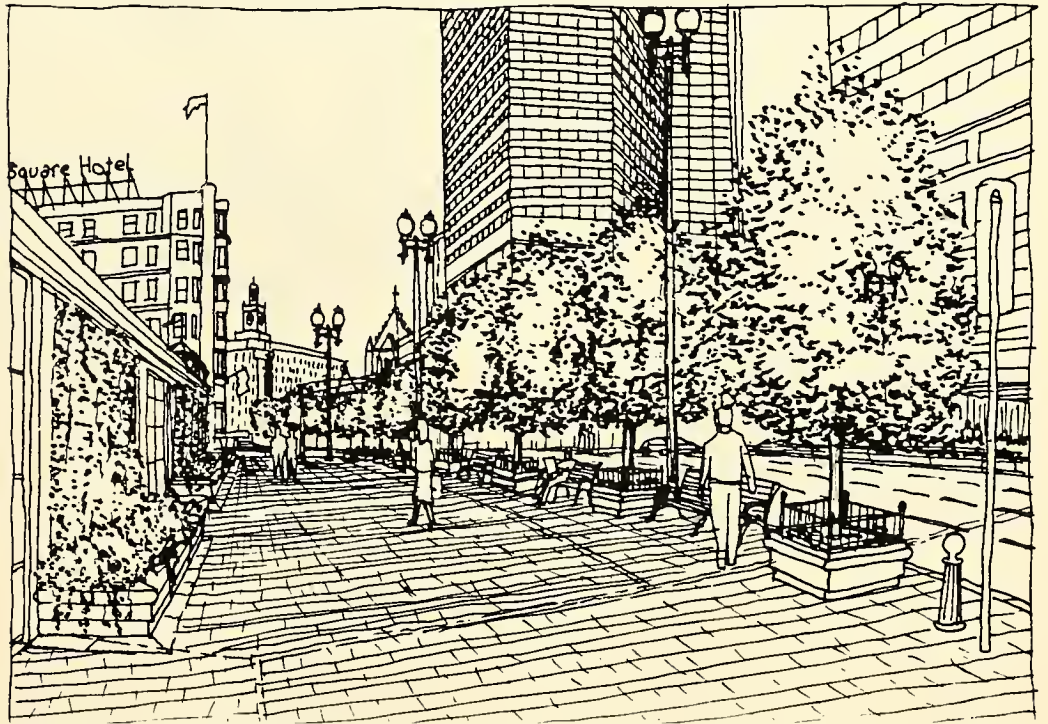
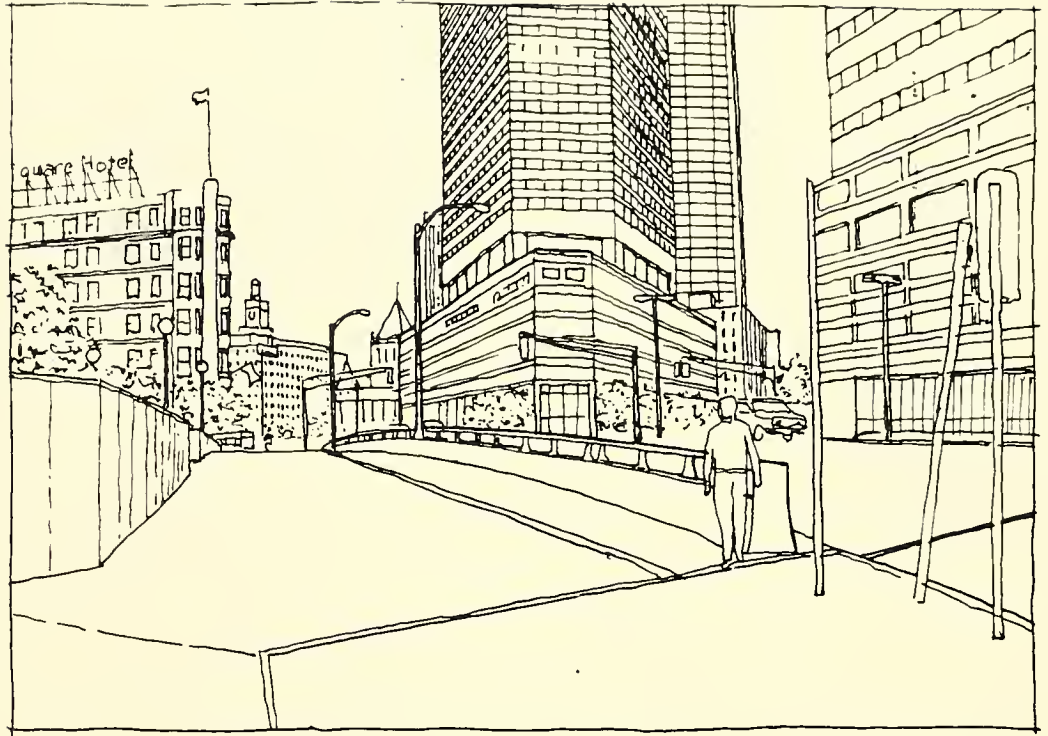
With its busy and confusing intersection this area is plagued with traffic congestion problems caused by Massachusetts Avenue use as a major north south artery. The traffic movement conflicts with the pedestrian traffic generated by the institutions and neighborhoods in the area this problem requires clarity and simplicity in a managed solution that acknowledges the diversity of use and events occurring at the intersection.

Proposed interventions are to:

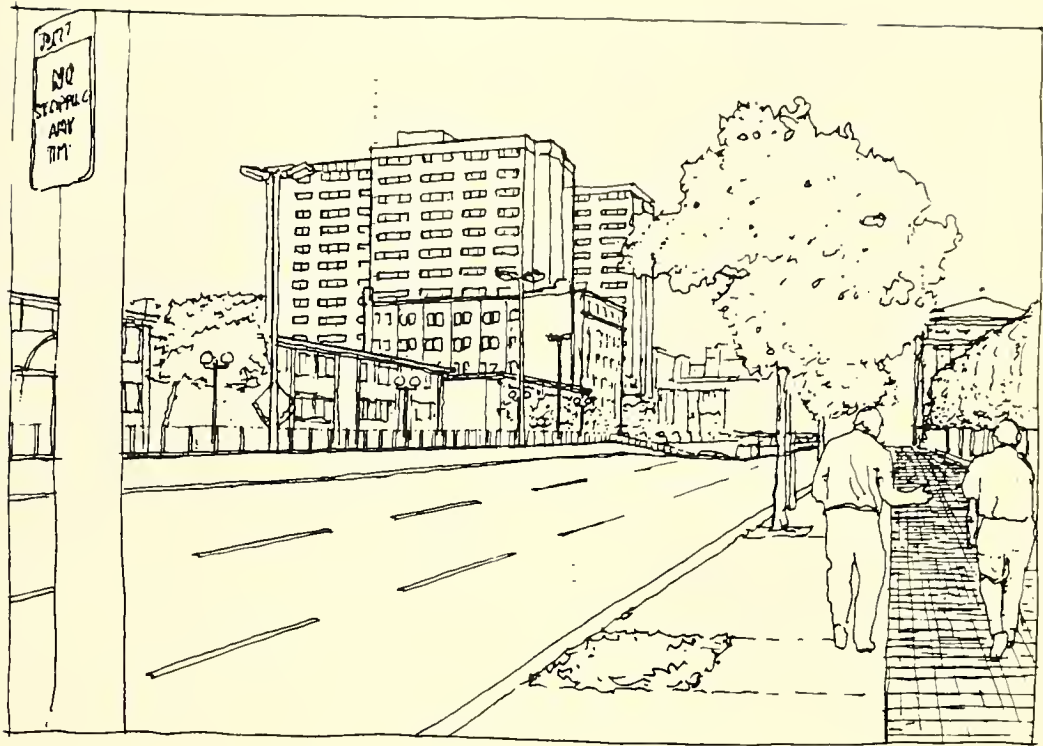
- . Mitigate conflicts between pedestrian and automobiles by delineation of generous crossing zones in conjunction with a comprehensive traffic control management system for the length of Massachusetts Avenue.
- . Encourage the rehabilitation of the MBTA station and its entries and promote public transportation for access to concerts and cultural events.
- . Advertise the use of the MBTA Green line for access to parking at the Prudential Center for cultural events.
- . Develop pedestrian realms within a theme using seasonal plantings, public monuments and fountains to reinforce the social and cultural activities in the Symphony Hall area.
- . Reinforce the variety of retail establishments, cafes, restaurants, galleries, housing and office spaces within the area through the provision of an identifiable public space.
- . Seek private sponsorship for the provision and maintenance of plantings, fountains, etc.



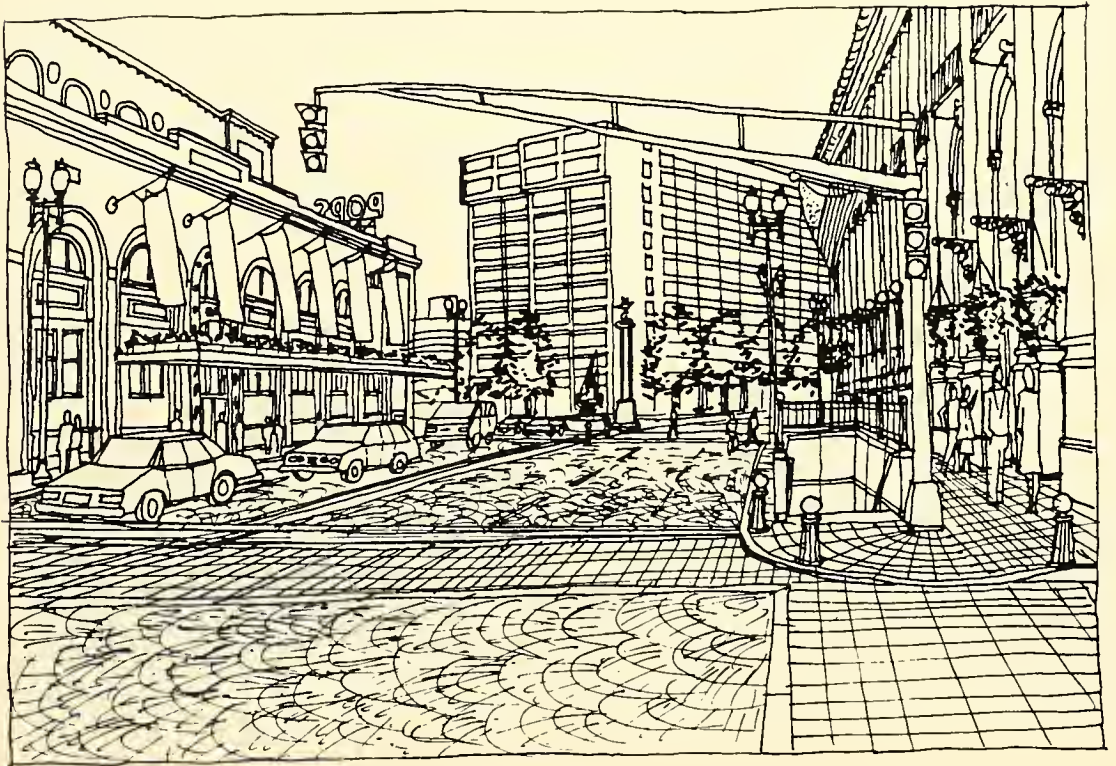
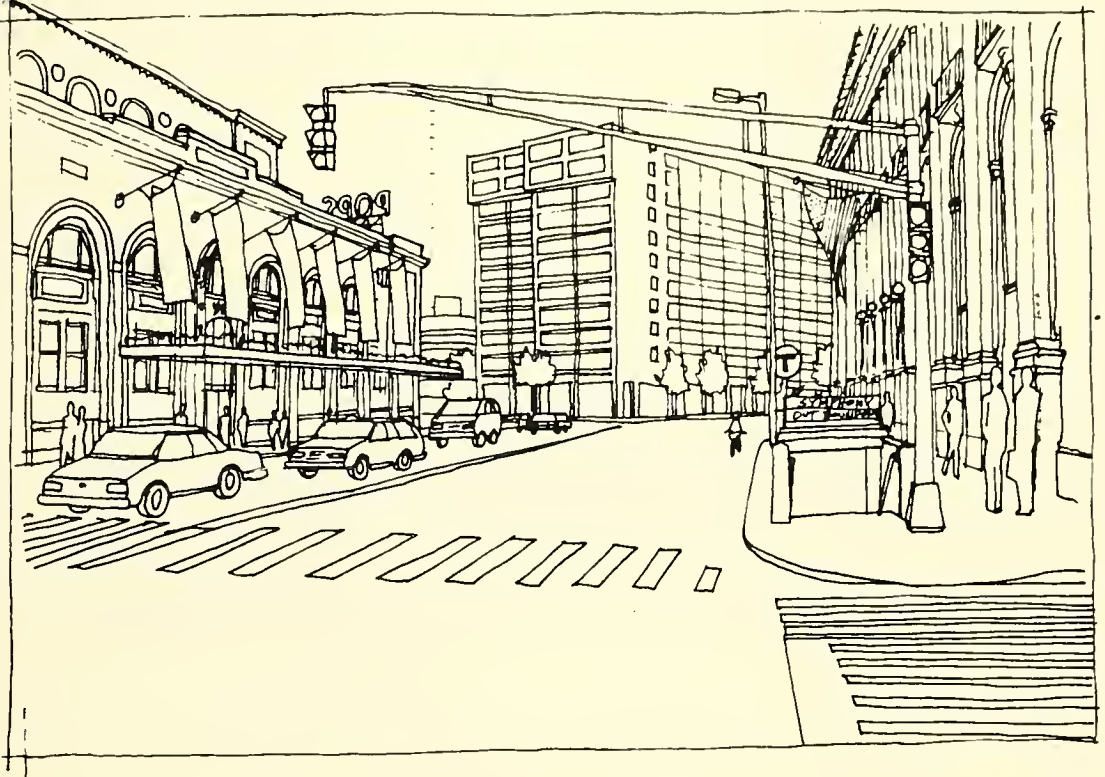
ILLUS. 1



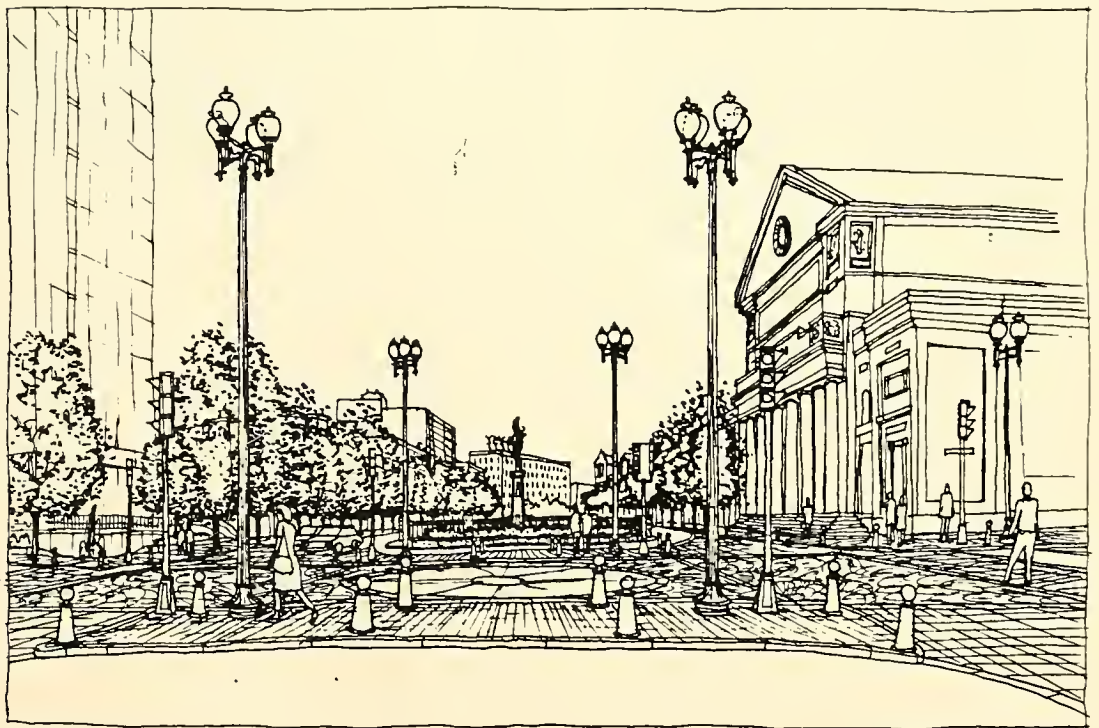
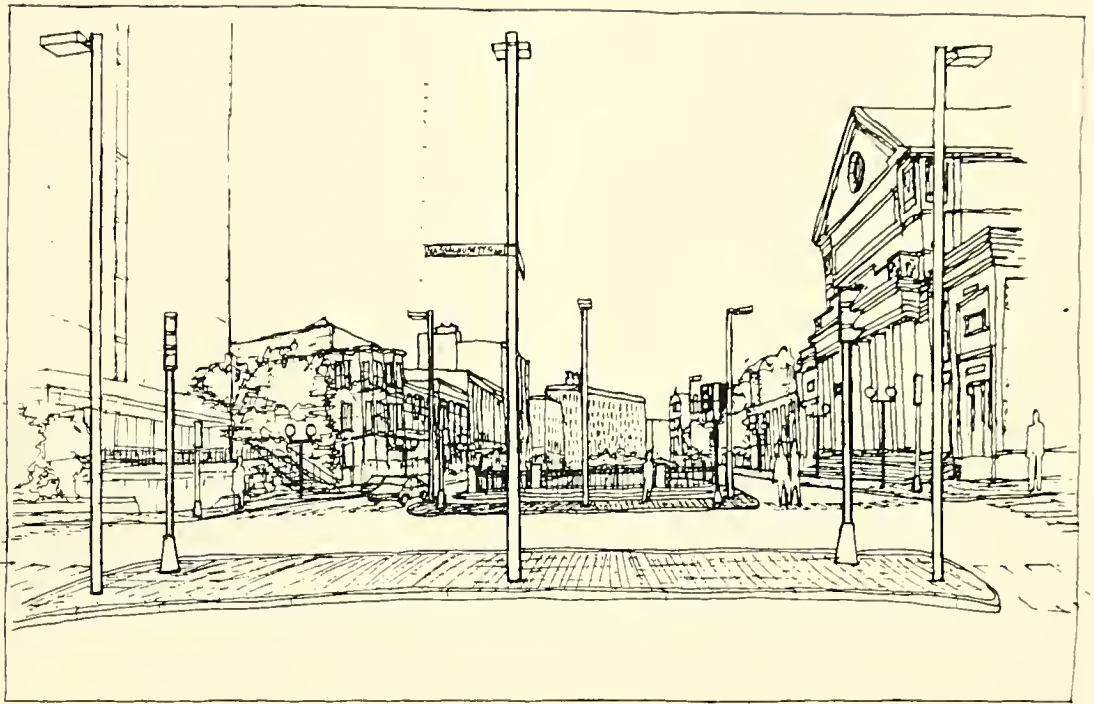
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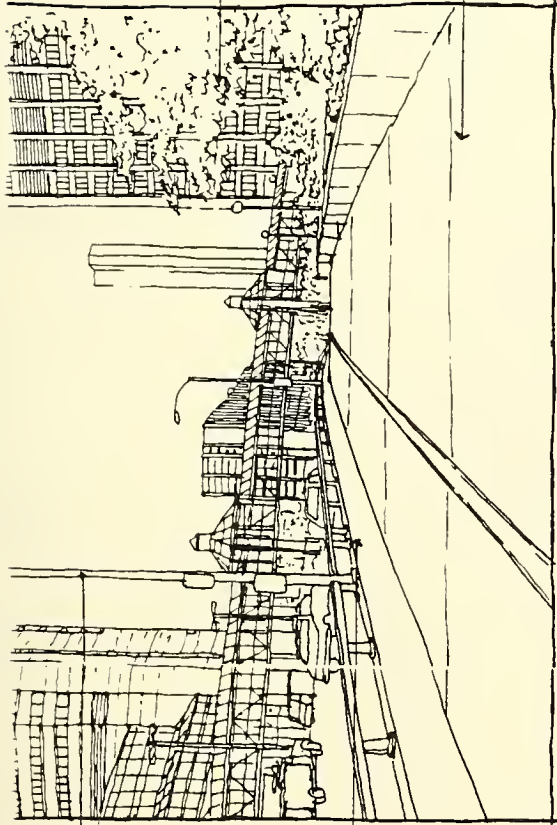
ILLUS. 3



ILLUS. 4



16609.5



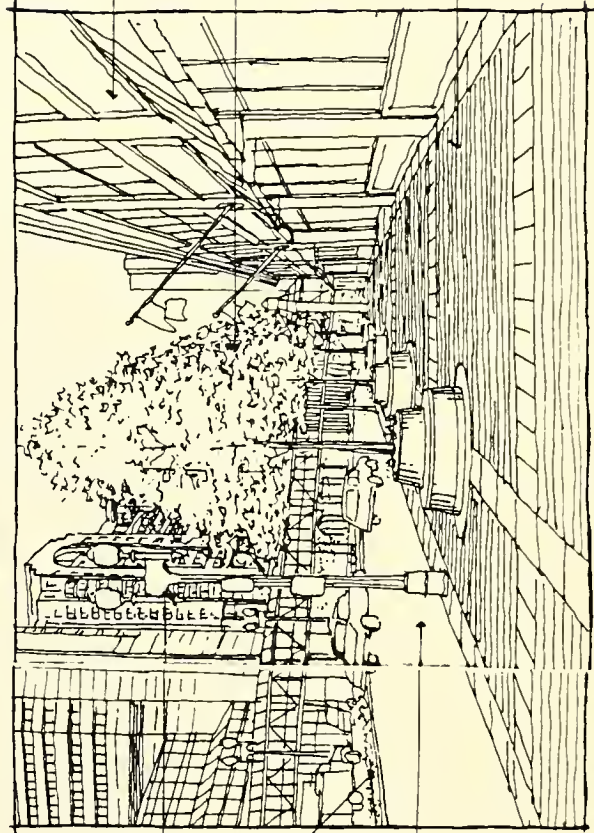
OVER SCALED 'HIGHWAY LIGHTING

'HIGHWAY' TYPE GUARDRAILS REDUCES PEDESTRIAN SENSE OF SIDEWALK

POORLY DEFINED EDGE CONDITION.

CONCRETE SIDEWALKS LACKING SCALE & TEXTURE

EXISTING CONDITION



NEW ACORN LIGHTS MORE IN SCALE TO PEDESTRIAN

FLOWERED/LANDSCAPED MEDIAN STRIP ADDS COLOR AND BETTER DEFINES BOULEVARD QUALITY TO STREET

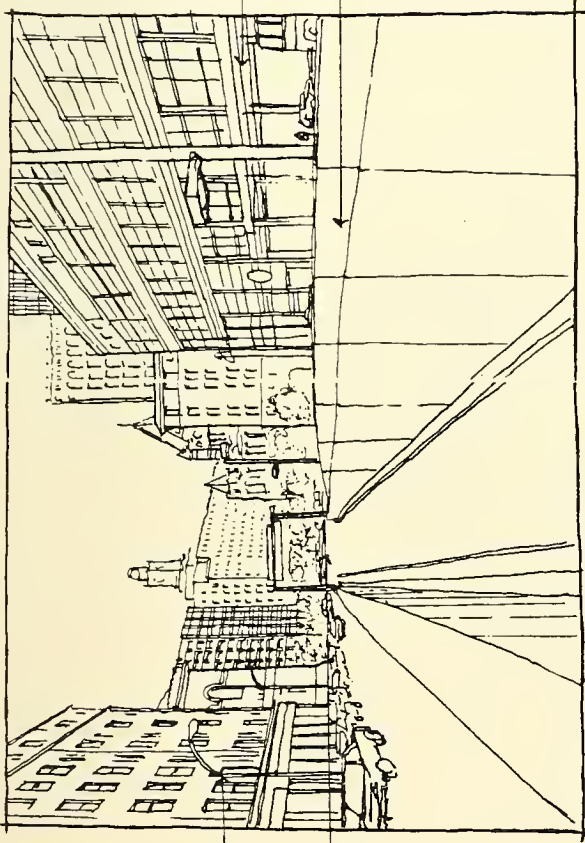
NEW TWO STORY FOOD STORE GRANTS BETTER SPATIAL ENCLOSURE OF STREET.

TREES ADD SCALE & SOFTEN EDGE.

HIGHWAY GUARDRAIL REMOVED

PATTERNED BRICK PAVERS

PROPOSED



NO SENSE OF ARRIVAL INTO
CORLEY SQUARE

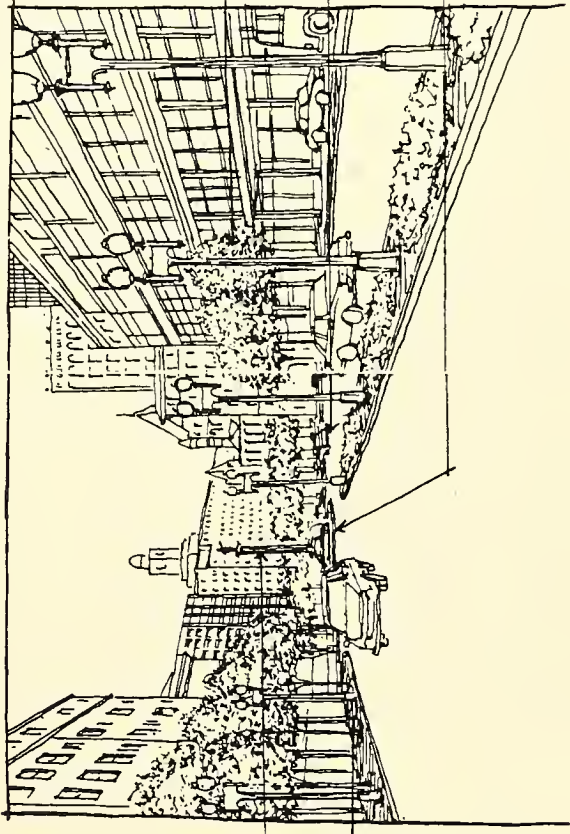
SCALELESS HIGHWAY LIGHTS

VERY DANGEROUS PEDESTRIAN
CROSSING

VERY HARD EDGES

MASS. PIKE ENTRANCE
RAMP DESTROY'S SENSE
OF STREET

EXISTING CONDITION



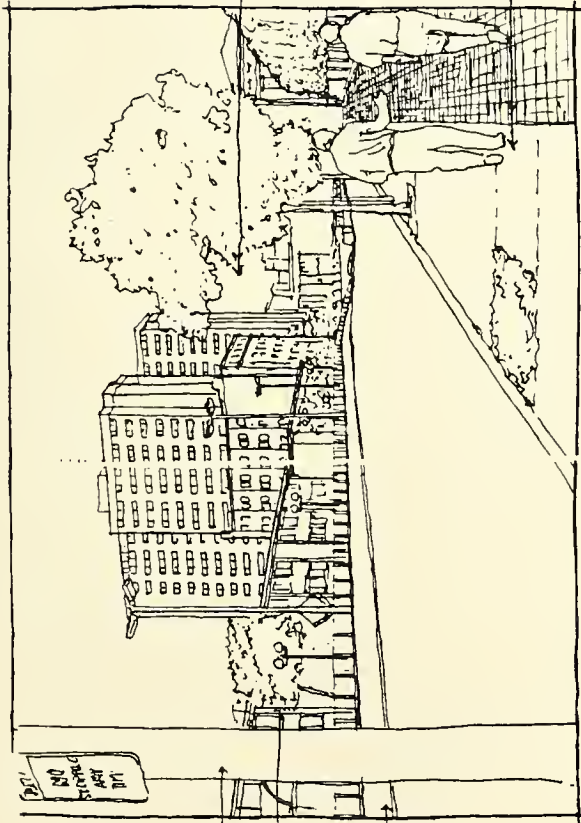
SCULPTURE TO ANNOUNCE
ARRIVAL TO CORLEY SQUARE &
BEGINNING OF HUNTINGTON

WIDENING OF SIDEWALK ALLOWS
FOR PLANTING OF TREES

TREES ADD SCALE & SOFTEN
EDGE

ELIMINATION OF RAMP ALLOWS
FOR CREATION OF A TRUE
STREET.

SAFER PEDESTRIAN
CROSSING



SCALELESS HIGHWAY LIGHTS

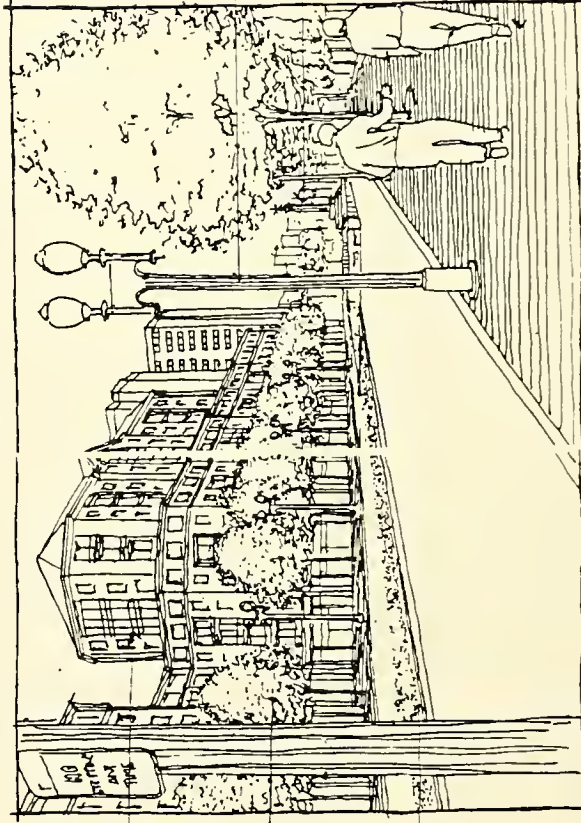
HOTEL OUT OF SCALE

'HIGHWAY' TYPE GUARDRAILS
REDUCES PEDESTRIAN SENSE
OF STREET

TREES PLACED TOO CLOSE
TO THE STREET - PASSING
BUSES RESPONSIBLE FOR
NOTCH.

POOR CONTRAST BETWEEN
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PARKING
AND CONCRETE SIDEWALK

EXISTING CONDITION



NEW BUILDINGS IN
BETTER SCALE WITH SURROUNDING

TREES CREATE SENSE OF
GRAND BOULEVARD

LANDSCAPE MEDIAN

ACORN LIGHT TO ADD
SCALE

SCULPTURE MARKS SQUARE
SYMPOSIUM

PAVING ON ENTIRE SIDEWALK

